

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 IO-10 L-03

NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01

SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /083 W

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O R 091059Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5439

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

SECDEF

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

AMEMBASSY BONN

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T LONDON 15556

E.O. 11652: XEDS-1

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR

SUBJECT: MBFR: LIMITATIONS ON SOVIET NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS

REF: (A) MBFR VIENNA 0438 (B) USNATO 5481

1. HMG IS WELL AWARE, INCLUDING AT WORKING LEVEL AT FCO, THAT WASHINGTON IS STUDYING POSSIBILITY OF DROPPING THE CONCEPT OF SEEKING A LIMITATION ON SOVIET NUCLEAR ELEMENTS AND, AS A RESULT, THE IDEA OF ACCEPTING A LIMITATION ON U.S. TANKS. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION ON ANOTHER SUBJECT OCTOBER 8 WITH JOHN THOMSON, ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY AT FCO FOR ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT, THOMSON, WHO KNOWS WASHINGTON BUREAUCRATIC SCENE VERY WELL, ASKED UQ IF VERIFICATION PANEL HAD MET RECENTLY ON ISSUE OF LIMITATION IN MBFR OF USSR NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS. WE SAID WE THOUGHT NOT, BUT WERE NOT SURE.

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2. THOMSON VOLUNTEERED THAT IF U.S. DECIDES TO PROPOSE

DROPPING THIS CONCEPT, UK WOULD PROBABLY NOT OBJECT. ALTHOUGH BRITISH HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED TO IDEA OF LIMITING SOVIET NUCLEAP ELEMENTS, THEY HAVE ALSO REALIZED THAT SUCH A PROPOSITION WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY LEAD TO SOVIET COUNTER-PROPOQAL FOR LIMIT ON U.S. TANKS. THOMSON WENT ON TO MAKE INDIRECTLY SAME POINT MENTIONED PARA 7, REFTEL B; THAT IS, THAT ELIMINATION OF LIMIT ON U.S. TANKS WOULD REMOVE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH A LIMIT WOULD LEAD TO RESTRICTION ON NON-U.S. ALLIED TANKS, AND BY EXTENSION OTHER NON-U.S. ALLIED EQUIPMENT, AN EVENTUALITY THE UK HAS CONTINUALLY AND STRONGLY EMPHASIZED IT WISHES TO AVOID.

3. COMMENT. ON BASIS OF THOMSON'S UNSOLICITED PERSONAL COMMENTS YESTERDAY, AND OUR FREQUENT GENERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH HMG. MBDR EXPERTS, OUR JUDGEMENT IS THAT UK WOULD PROBABLY SEE PEDUCTION OF THREAT OF LIMITATIONS ON NON-U.S. ALLIED EQUIPMENT AS MORE THEN SUFFICIENT INCENTIVE TO AGREE TO DPOP CONCEPT OF LIMITING SOVIET NUCLEARS. WE WOULD ONLY ADD THAT IF BRITISH DO GO ALONG WITH SUCH A U.S. DECISIMN, THEY WOULD EXPECT THAT POSSIBILITY OF LIMITATIONS OL NON-U.S. ALLIED EQUIPMENT WOULD BE BURIED AND STAY BURIED. IF, BECAUSE OF EVENTUAL FURTHER RECONSIDERATIMN OF ISSUE IN WASHINGTON, CORPSE STARTED TO STIR, WE WOULD FORESEE SHARP AND DEEPLY-FELT INDIGNATION AND RESISTANCE HERE.

RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES), NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON15556
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750351-0104
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751066/aaaacgxv.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MBFR VIENNA 438
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 APR 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <25 SEP 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: LIMITATIONS ON SOVIET NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS
TAGS: PARM, UK, UR, NATO, MBFR, (THOMSON, JOHN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006